

Frankenstein

by Mary Shelley

I

My name is Victor Frankenstein. I was born in Geneva. At the age of eighteen I went to university where I studied chemistry and medicine. One day, I realized that I could use the energy from lightning to discover the secrets of life, to give life to things... or to people that were dead, and to create new living creatures.

So, I built a very tall mast on top of the roof of my laboratory. It would catch lightning and send electricity down to a machine in the laboratory. Then I decided to make a body: I bought or stole pieces of human bodies, and slowly and carefully I put them all together.

I had wanted to create a beautiful man, but the face of the creature I had made was ugly. His skin was wrinkled and yellow, and his eyes were as yellow as his skin. His thin lips opened in a cruel smile. His legs and arms were huge: my creature was not a man, but a monster that looked terrible and frightening.

II

I connected the body to the wires from my machine.

Two days later, I saw dark clouds in the sky, and I knew that a storm was coming. My mast began to do its work immediately, and the electricity from the lightning travelled down the mast to my machine.

At first, nothing happened. But after a few minutes I saw the creature's body begin to move. Slowly, terribly, the body came alive. The arms and legs began to move, and slowly the monster sat up. The dead body had been an ugly thing, but alive, it was much more horrible! I wanted to escape from it. I rushed out of the laboratory and ran into town. But the monster had escaped...

A few months later, a young boy's body was found in the forest. It was my own brother who had been strangled.

III

Then, I decided to go into the forest. A storm broke out, the lightning lit up the sky and I saw a huge figure standing in the rain. I knew at once what it was. It was the creature I had made. What was he doing there? The answer was too obvious: he was my brother's murderer. I realized then that I had created a monster. I felt fear for my family and I hated

him. I saw him coming towards me. On his face was a look of deep sadness, but also of evil.

I hated him so much that at first I couldn't speak. But at last I said: "You are an evil creature. I will kill you if I can, because you have killed my brother."

The monster's yellow eyes looked at me. "I am the unhappiest creature in the world," he said. "You made me and you should love me and be kind to me, like a father. Your brother died because you did not love me. Why did you create me if you were not ready to love me? I am alone and miserable. People shout and throw stones at me. You must make another creature like me, a woman monster, and the I won't hurt anyone. Be kind to me, and I will learn to be kind and love others."

He was so miserable that I felt sorry for him. I said, "I shall do what you ask, but you must promise to live somewhere in the world where there are no people. You must promise you'll stay away from people."

"I promise! I promise!" he cried. "Please, stat your work. I shall watch you, and when you are ready, you can be sure I will come back."

He turned away and left.

IV

Two months later, when most of my work was done, I realised I was making another monster perhaps even more evil than the first one.

One day, while I was working in my laboratory, I looked up and once again I saw the yellow eyes full of hate and evil. I went to the laboratory table where the new creature was lying. I pulled off the wires that attached her to my machine. Then, I took a sharp knife and cut through the body I had put together so carefully.

The monster saw me destroy his woman monster and cried, "You have destroyed my hopes and happiness. You have left me with one feeling – hatred... and only one wish – to destroy your happiness. Remember this: I shall be with you on your wedding night."

I sat and cried as I thought of my dear Elizabeth. I loved her so much! "I won't let the monster visit us on our wedding night, I shall fight and kill him before he can kill us," I thought.

V

Ten days later, Elizabeth and I were married. On our wedding night the wind howled and soon a great storm broke out over us. Every noise and every shadow frightened me. I asked Elizabeth to go to bed and decided to search for the monster. I searched every corner of the house – every dark doorway and staircase. I could not find him, and I began

to hope that he had not followed us. But suddenly, I heard a loud and terrible scream coming from our room. On the bed, Elizabeth lay still, in the cold sleep of death. I took her in my arms and saw the terrible marks of the murderer's fingers on her neck.

As I held Elizabeth close, I saw the monster watching me through the open window of the room. There was a, evil grin on his face. I pulled my gun from my coat and fired at him. But I missed and he ran away.

VI

The awful news of Elizabeth's death killed my poor father, who died in my arms. From that moment on, my only goal was to find the monster and kill him.

One day, I heard his voice. "I want you to feel, day after day, the pain and misery that you have given me."

I ran towards the voice, but I saw the monster running away, too fast for me to catch. I followed him. He kept leaving messages to tell me where he was.

In his last message, the monster told me that he was going north where the cold would hurt me and make me more miserable.

VII

I followed him to the cold icy land of the North. At last, I saw his terrible figure standing in front of me. He turned to me and said, "I have felt much pain and unhappiness. I had asked you to create a friend for me. But you destroyed her. I had no family to love, so I destroyed yours. I knew I was doing evil but I couldn't stop myself. Now my own death is near. I shall go north, across the ice. I shall build a great fire and lie down on it and I shall be at peace."

Then, he went away into the icy sea which carried him away, blanketing him in darkness.